

# Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy

## **H**AZARD **A**LERT **L**IVE **T**OMORROW

### **GAS WELL AND TRANSMISSION LINE SAFETY**

With approximately 3750 active gas wells, over 400 plugged wells and hundreds of miles of gas transmission lines in Southwest Virginia, surface and underground coal mining operations must employ safety procedures and practices to prevent serious accidents and potential loss of life and property. Two recent incidents in Virginia involving damage to gas well heads during surface mining operations prompt this safety alert.

Tire casings placed  
to protect well head prior  
to blasting

Rock from blast damaging  
gas well head



11/19/01 – Gas Well – Wise Co.

Location of bucket  
positioned over gas well  
head prior to blasting

Location of Gas Well



12/15/00 – Gas Well – Wise Co.

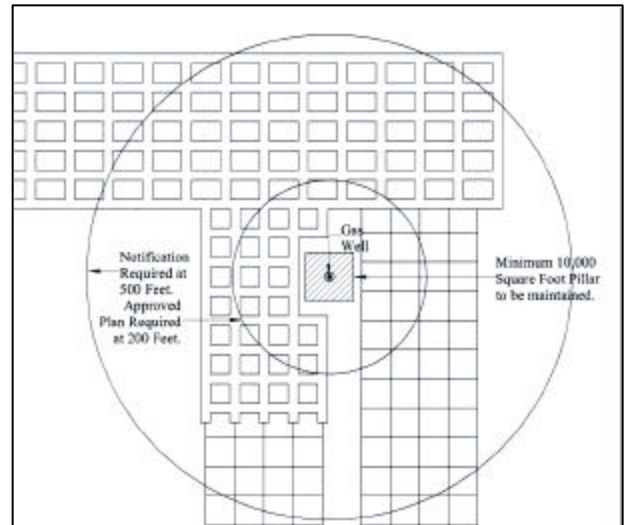
### **Coal Mine Safety Laws of Virginia require:**

- Mine operators file notification with the Chief, the well operator and the gas and oil inspector when mining within 500 ft. of any gas well or vertical ventilation hole (VVH).
- Mine operators submit a plan to the Chief for approval to mine within 200 ft. of a VVH, gas well or gas transmission line. A notice of intent and copy of the proposed plan must also be provided to the affected well, VVH or gas transmission line operator.
- The location of all natural gas transmission pipelines must be identified and conspicuously marked and a pre-shift examination conducted of the location of these lines whenever workings approach within 500 ft.

## GAS WELL AND TRANSMISSION LINE SAFETY (cont.)

### Key Safety Points When Mining Near Gas Wells and Transmission Lines

- Early and effective communication and coordination between mine operators and gas well, VVH and transmission line operators is essential for development of required plans and implementation of safety procedures.
- Complete and confirm all required notifications and plan approvals before mining activities approach any gas well, VVH or transmission line.
- Carefully review and discuss the provisions of approved plans to mine within 200 ft. of a well and transmission lines with all affected mine personnel and others as needed.
- Mine operators should assure that the surface locations of all well structures and transmission lines are clearly identified and conspicuously marked prior to surface mining activities.
- Mine operators and gas well and transmission line operators should coordinate follow-up procedures to ensure that plans and procedures carried out when mining within 200 ft. of structures are effective in providing protection for miners and gas well, VVH and transmission line structures.



***Accidents and incidents involving gas wells and transmission lines represent the potential for major loss! Respect the potential hazards involved and always diligently follow all safety plans and procedures.***